

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6360

S E C R E T MADRID 4359

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SP, US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT CARRERO BLANCO

1. I PAID A COURTESY CALL ON CARRERO BLANCO THIS MORNING IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AND HAD A WIDE-RANGING GENERAL CONVERSATION WITH HIM FOR OVER HALF AN HOUR.

2. I TOLD CARRERO THAT I HAD READ HIS RECENT SPEECH TO THE CORTES WITH GREAT INTEREST AND HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD PRESENTED IN IN FOR ALL TO SEE THE VIEWS THAT HE HELD ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS. HE HAD ACCEPTED THE PRESIDENCY AS AN OBLIGATION, AS A MILITARY MAN CARRIES OUT HIS DUTY. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY AS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS REMARKS CONCERNING RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN, HE STATED THAT HIS REMARKS REFLECTED A SERIOUS DESIRE TO RENEW DISCUSSIONS ON REVISION OF THE CONCORDAT.

3. CARRERO BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF WATERGATE AND DEPLORED THE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN EXPLOITING THIS MATTER.

4. TAKING UP THE SUBJECT OF CURRENT SOVIET INTENTIONS, CARRERO ASSERTED THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD CONSIDERED THREE GENERAL COURSES FOR ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES. THEY HAD RULED OUT GENERAL WAR BECAUSE OF US NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES. THEY HAD TRIED TO WEAKEN WESTERN NATIONS THROUGH LOCAL WARS, SUCH AS KOREA AND VIET NAM. THEY WERE NOW FOCUSING THEIR EFFORTS ON SUBVERSION AS A SAFER AND MORE EFFECTIVE WAY OF UNDERMINING THE WEST.

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5. DURING A LENGTHY EXCHANGE ON STRATEGIC AND MILITARY SITUATIONS

IN MEDITERRANEAN, STATING HE WAS SPEAKING INFORMALLY FROM ONE ADMIRAL TO ANOTHER, AND REFERRING TO MY PREVIOUS POSITION AS CINCSOUTH, CARRERO EMPHASIZED THE DANGER OF ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET AIR FORCES IN ALGERIA AND/OR MOROCCO WHICH WOULD THEN BE IN POSITION TO CONTROL ENTRANCE TO MEDITERRANEAN. I AGREED WITH THIS ASSESSMENT, POINTING OUT THE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN BASINS, WHEREAS IN THE EASTERN BASIN WE COULD NEUTRALIZE SOVIET AIR IN SYRIA, EGYPT AND EVEN LIBYA WITH OUR LAND BASED AIR IN ITALY, GREECE AND TURKEY AS WELL AS OUR CARRIERS, NATO DID NOT POSSESS THE FACILITIES TO DO SO IN THE WESTERN BASIN. HE SAID THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT AIRCRAFT CARRIERS ARE THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN NAVAL OPERATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE HIGH SEAS ALTHOUGH IN RESTRICTED AREAS SUCH AS THE MEDITERRANEAN THEIR SUPREMACY IS AFFECTED BY LAND-BASED AIR. WITH RESPECT TO NAVAL FORCES IN THE MED, HE DISMISSED ALL EXCEPT THE SIXTH FLEET, WHICH HE CALLED THE ONLY VIABLE FORCE BECAUSE OF ITS AIRCRAFT CARRIERS. CARRERO REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED CONCERN AT SOVIET INFILTRATION OF COUNTRIES IN NORTH AFRICA. HE FELT THAT THE US AND UK, IN REFUSING HELP TO NASSER IN CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASWAN DAM, HAD FORCED NASSER, AS A MATTER OF NATIONAL PRIDE, TO TURN TO THE RUSSIANS FOR HELP AND HAD THUS ENABLED THE SOVIETS TO EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE IN EGYPT.

HE SAID WE ALSO MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN INTERFERING WHEN THE BRITISH AND FRENCH MADE THEIR ILL-FATED ATTEMPT IN 1956. CARRERO FELT THAT A SIMILAR SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING IN LIBYA AND HE EXPRESSED CONCERN RE THE VULNERABILITY OF ALGERIA AND MOROCCO TO SOVIET INFILTRATION. CARRERO DID NOT SEEM TO FULLY UNDERSTAND QADHAFI'S POSITION, CLASSIFYING LIBYA AS A PRO-COMMUNIST NATION. HE DESCRIBED QADHAFI AS SOME SORT OF A NUT.

6. RE MOROCCO, CARRERO SAID THAT THE SPANISH HAD NO GREAT ADMIRATION FOR HASSAN BUT FELT THAT THE MOROCCAN OPPOSITION TO HIM WAS A WORSE ALTERNATIVE, WHICH WOULD FACILITATE SOVIET EFFORTS IN THE AREA. BOUMEDIENE AND QADHAFI WOULD DO ANYTHING TO UNDERCUT HASSAN. THE GOS THEREFORE SUPPORTED HASSAN AND HOPED THAT THE US WOULD ALSO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND ARMS TO BOLSTER HIS POSITION, OTHERWISE WE WILL FIND THE SOVIETS MORE THAN WILLING TO PROVIDE HIM WITH ARMS.

7. CARRERO RAISED THE SUBJECT OF US RESTRICTIONS ON SOY BEAN EXPORTS.
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PORTS, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE TO SPAIN OF RECEIVING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF THIS COMMODITY WHICH HE SAID WOULD AMOUNT TO 1 1/2 MILLION TONS FROM THE NEXT HARVEST. I TOLD HIM THERE WERE INDICATIONS THE SOYBEAN SUPPLY SITUATION MIGHT BE EASING IN THE FUTURE. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER RESTRICTIONS OF US EXPORTS OF SCRAP METAL.

8. I MENTIONED TO CARRERO MY RECENT TALK WITH LOPEZ RODO NOTING THAT LOPEZ RODO HAD RELATED THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE TO NEGOTIATIONS ON

RENEWAL OF THE SPAIN-US BILATERAL AGREEMENT. I TOLD CARRERO THAT THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE WAS ONE BETWEEN TWO GOOD FRIENDS OF THE US IN WHICH THE US HAD CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED A NEUTRAL POSTURE. TO BE HELPFUL, SECRETARY ROGERS HAD SPOKEN TO THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY ABOUT THE ISSUE, AS REQUESTED BY LOPEZ BRAVO, BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF US NEUTRALITY. WHEN I MENTIONED THAT LOPEZ RODO HAD INDICATED TO ME THE VIEW THERE WOULD BE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR MAINTAINING BOTH ROTA AND GIBRALTAR AS BASES IN THE AREA IF THE GIBRALTAR QUESTION WAS NOT RESOLVED, CARRERO MADE A GESTURE TO THE EFFECT THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS A SERIOUS IDEA AND COULD BE DISREGARDED. I SAID "THESE ARE TWO SEPARATE MATTERS" AND HE AGREED. I POINTED OUT THAT OUR POSITION IN ROTA IS TO OUR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE, AND HE EMPHATICALLY AGREED, ADDING THAT HE RECOGNIZED IT IS A JOINT EFFORT CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEFENSE OF SPAIN.

9. BEFORE LEAVING, I TOLD CARRERO THAT I HAVE BEEN TRAVELLING WIDELY THROUGHOUT SPAIN, HAVING ALREADY VISITED 38 OF THE 50 PROVINCES, THAT WITHOUT EXCEPTION I HAVE BEEN GREETED WITH GREAT COURTESY AND WARMTH AND THAT I HAVE EVERYWHERE RECEIVED EXPRESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP FOR THE US, WHICH APPEARED TO ME CLEARLY TO HAVE BEEN SPONTANEOUS. HE WAS PLEASED AND REPLIED THAT THERE IS GENUINE FRIENDSHIP AND ADMIRATION FOR THE US IN SPAIN, AND THAT US IS RECOGNIZED BY ALL AS THE MOST IMPORTANT AS WELL AS MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

10. CARRERO WAS VERY FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION AND SEEMED TO BE IN GOOD FORM. HE AGREED TO OBSERVE THE NEXT POOP DECK EXERCISE, TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER, BETWEEN SIXTH FLEET AND SPANISH NAVY AND AIR FORCE.
RIVERO

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